



News Release

For Immediate Release
Wednesday, August 1, 2007
Contact:
Kalynn Filion
UDOH Cancer Program
801-538-7009

Low-cost HPV Vaccine Now Available to Eligible Utah Women *Vaccine helps protect against cancer-causing strains of HPV virus*

SALT LAKE CITY – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) is offering low-cost vaccines to prevent the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) to eligible women in Utah – specifically, women between the ages of 19-26 who have no health insurance or have insurance that does not pay for the vaccine.

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the U.S., causing genital warts and up to 70 percent of all cervical cancers. The vaccine was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in June 2006 and is effective against the four strains of the virus that cause the majority of health problems.

“The vaccine is a huge step forward in eliminating cervical cancer and saving women’s lives,” said UDOH Executive Director Dr. David N. Sundwall. “However, we want to remind women that the vaccine will not eliminate the need for annual Pap screenings because it does not protect women from all types of HPV that cause cancer.”

It is estimated that at least 50 percent of sexually active people will get HPV at some time in their lives. Although the majority of these infections cause no symptoms, persistent genital HPV infection can cause cervical cancer in women and other types of anal and genital cancers and genital warts in both men and women.

The incidence of invasive cervical cancer in the United States has decreased significantly over the last 40 years because of widespread use of Pap testing, which can detect lesions on the cervix before they become cancer.

-MORE-

Page 2 of 2 - Low-Cost HPV Vaccine Now Available to Eligible Utah Women

The Center's for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the HPV vaccine for girls 11 and 12 years of age and is given in a series of three injections over a six-month period. The vaccine is also recommended for girls and women 13 through 26 years of age who did not receive it when they were younger and may be given at the same time as other vaccines.

The UDOH is able to fund the low-cost vaccines for women ages 19-26 because of a \$1 million donation from Utah industrialist Jon Huntsman, Sr. in April. Additionally, qualifying adolescents and teens may receive the vaccine through the CDC's Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program.

There is a small fee charged to administer the vaccine. For a list of locations where the vaccine is available, call 1-800-717-1811 or for more information visit www.utahcancer.org.

#

The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death; assuring access to affordable, quality health care; and promoting healthy lifestyles.